

HB854 Statewide Housing Study

Program Fact Sheet

Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP)

Department of Housing and Community Development

Note: This fact sheet was created in October 2021. Program details can change regularly. For the most up-to-date information on this program and a program contact, please visit the link below:

[Link to program website](#)

01 Program goals

DHCD launched a Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) Implementation Grant in April 2021 to mitigate evictions through a local/coordinated systems approach. Additionally, DHCD provided planning grants beginning in June 2021 to support those localities not served by VERP grants. The Planning Grant program is designed to aid localities and nonprofits to better understand eviction prevention needs and to build capacity to mitigate evictions, as well as prepare grantees for a future VERP application by building local capacity. This program is funded as part of the \$3 million allocated to DHCD in FY21 for the VERP program.

02 Funding sources

The program is supported by state funds. In 2019, Governor Northam proposed \$6.6 million, or \$3.3 million per year, to establish an eviction prevention and diversion pilot program. During the 2020 Special Session, the General Assembly approved, and Governor Northam signed, a two-year budget that included \$6.6 million for the pilot program.

The current funding allocation for FY21 is \$3.3 million dollars. This includes \$300,000 for DHCD

administration and \$3 million in program funding. VERP program funding includes \$2.61 million awarded to grantees to implement programs, \$300,000 for VERP Planning Grants and \$90,000 for program evaluation.

A local match is encouraged, but not required for the VERP Implementation and Planning Grant programs. DHCD gives a scoring preference for applications that include local match contributions (both in-kind and cash match).

03 Governance

Funding and allocation decisions for both the VERP Implementation and VERP Planning Grant programs are awarded based on a competitive application process. Applicants submit their proposals in DHCD's Centralized Application Management System (CAMS) and staff score applications using evaluative criteria based on the narrative questions posted in the Program and Application Guidelines. The evaluation criteria looked at the following areas: need, approach, and capacity.

04 Population served

Both VERP Implementation and VERP Planning Grants prioritize Virginia localities with high eviction rates and/or their inclusion in the General Assembly created pilot diversion program (Danville, Hampton, Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond, Chesapeake and Newport News). DHCD only awards one grant per locality.

Applicants for both grants must be a nonprofit or unit of local government with a proven history of meeting the needs of lower-income households through the provision of financial assistance and housing support programs and with the existing capacity to successfully implement the pilot program.

DHCD does not prescribe specific client eligibility requirements for VERP Implementation or VERP

Planning Grants. VERP Grantees submit their program's eligibility requirements as part of their application and DHCD approves and amends them as necessary. VERP Grantees are also responsible for creating an assessment tool designed to identify those households most at risk of housing instability and to have clear policies and procedures that specify household eligibility and program approach including type and amount of assistance based on assessment scores.

Assessment criteria include factors such as:

- Household headed by a person of color
- Single female head of household
- Number of recent moves within the past 12 months
- Age of the head of household and presence of children
- Involvement of child services or foster care
- Non-leaseholder status
- Domestic violence
- Frequency of law enforcement involvement at the unit
- Tenants living in large multi-family properties
- Housing cost burden

05 How program works

VERP mitigates evictions through a local/regional coordinated systems approach. This systems approach includes creating a collective impact model where organizations that serve as a safety-net within the community collaborate to ensure households have early access to resources to stabilize their housing situations. When evictions cannot be prevented, the system diverts evictions once the household receives an unlawful detainer. All payments are made to third parties, not the program participant. Eligible expenses include housing financial assistance (rent, utilities, security deposits, etc.), stabilization support services (work supports and legal services) and case management (housing counseling, landlord outreach and negotiation). DHCD requires that each Grantee develop a Local VERP Advisory Committee to foster

local coordination. Advisory committees must be composed of several housing stability organizations including workforce development, legal aid and people with lived experience.

06 Program history

The program began in 2021 (April 1--VERP Implementation Grant; June 15--VERP Planning Grant).

07 Program highlights

- VERP is a relatively new program and there is no current data to assess yet.
- The first round of grantees in 2021 were: 1) United Way of the Virginia Peninsula (\$1,050,000), Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia (\$800,000), Norfolk Eviction Diversion and Support Program (\$560,000), and Family Crisis Support Services (\$200,000).